

February 2009

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

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Library of Congress, February 2009

<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/commemorative-observations/african-american.php>

National African American History Month had its origins in 1915 when historian and author Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. This organization is now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History ("ASALH"). Through this organization Dr. Woodson initiated the first Negro History Week in February 1926. Dr. Woodson selected the week in February that included the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two key figures in the history of African Americans.

FREE AT LAST: THE U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, January 2009

<http://www.america.gov/publications/books-content/free-at-last.html>

This publication recounts how African-American slaves and their descendants struggled to win — both in law and in practice — the civil rights enjoyed by other Americans. It is a story of dignified persistence and struggle, a story that produced great heroes and heroines, and one that ultimately succeeded by forcing Americans to confront squarely the shameful gap between their universal principles of equality and justice and the inequality, injustice, and oppression faced by millions of their fellow citizens

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A LEGACY OF FREEDOM

U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, 2008

<http://www.america.gov/publications/books/lincoln.html>

The year 2009 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. president often considered the greatest of this country's leaders. Americans' reverence for Lincoln began with his tragic death by assassination in 1865, at the end of a brutal civil war in which 623,000 men died, the American Union withstood its greatest test, and slavery was banished. And his hallowed place in the iconography of America continues.

AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

The Migration Policy Institute, February 2009

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=719>

The number of African immigrants in the United States grew 40-fold between 1960 and 2007, from 35,355 to 1.4 million. Most of this growth has taken place since 1990.

Compared to other immigrants, the African born tend to be highly educated and speak English well. However, they are also more likely not to be naturalized US citizens than other immigrants.

ARTS & THE ECONOMY: USING ARTS AND CULTURE TO STIMULATE STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

National Governors Association, January 15, 2009

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0901ARTSANDECONOMY.PDF>

Fostering the arts and culture sector has played a vital role in state economic development, according to the report. Arts and culture-related industries, collectively known as “creative industries,” provide direct economic benefits to states and communities by creating jobs, attracting new investments, generating tax revenues and stimulating tourism and consumer purchases.

BUILDING TOMORROW’S WORKFORCE: PROMOTING THE EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF HISPANIC IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN AMERICA

Excelencia in Education, January 21, 2009

<http://www.edexcelencia.org/pdf/Building%20Tomorrow's%20Workforce%20full%20report.pdf>

Strategic partnerships between industry and community colleges that engage younger Hispanic immigrants can boost the economy by training an important proportion of U.S. workers for future jobs. The report looks at six innovative partnerships throughout the country.

THE DEATH PENALTY IN 2008

Death Penalty Information Center, December 2008

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/2008YearEnd.pdf>

Executions resumed in 2008 after a de facto moratorium was effectively lifted by the Supreme Court following its decision upholding lethal injection. But only the South returned to regular executions, accounting for 95% of executions carried out in the country in 2008. Almost half of the executions were in Texas. In some states, such as California, Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina, the lethal injection issue remains unsettled, and no executions occurred.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE UNITED STATES: 2007

U.S. Bureau of the Census, January 2009

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p20-560.pdf>

This report provides estimates of educational attainment in the United States, including comparisons by demographic characteristics, such as age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. Information about educational attainment among the native-born and foreign-born populations is included.

FROM QUALIFICATIONS TO RESULTS: PROMOTING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH FEDERAL POLICY

Center for American Progress, January 28, 2009

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/01/pdf/het.pdf>

This paper briefly explains why a focus on effectiveness is needed and how it might work, and it describes current federal policy related to teacher quality. It then provides some new ideas about how federal policy can stimulate change at the state and local level to help states and districts move from a qualifications focus to an effectiveness focus.

IMMIGRANTS AND THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS

Migration Policy Institute, January 2009

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/lmi_recessionJan09.pdf

As the nation sinks into a recession that may be the worst since the Great Depression, the economic crisis raises fundamental questions about future immigration flows to and from the United States and how current and prospective immigrants will fare.

IMPENDING DEADLINES ON A NUMBER OF IMMIGRATION DECISIONS AWAIT OBAMA

Migration Policy Institute, January 15, 2009

<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=717>

The new administration will likely face pressure from immigrant advocates, labor organizations, and business groups — many of whom are hoping for a dramatic change in immigration policy under the new Obama presidency, with or without legislative action in Congress.

MAPPING NEW DIRECTIONS: HIGHER EDUCATION FOR OLDER ADULTS

American Council on Education, January 16, 2009

<http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/CLLL/Reinvesting/MapDirections.pdf>

Despite successful efforts by some colleges and universities to create lifelong learning programs for adults aged 55 and older, many institutions remain stuck in outmoded, one-dimensional views of this population, according to the report. It offers recommendations to colleges and universities for broadening the participation of older adults who will comprise one-third of the nation's overall population by 2030.

THE NEW WASHINGTON PRESS CORPS

Pew Research Center's Project on Excellence in Journalism, February 11, 2009

http://www.journalism.org/analysis_report/new_washington_press_corps

In the past two decades, the makeup of the Washington D.C. press corps has been fundamentally transformed. While the old media have shrunk alarmingly, two new elements have risen up to virtually replace them in number. What are the implications for news consumers in the U.S. and abroad? This report on the changing Washington media landscape addresses those questions.

OVERVIEW: THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND EVOLUTION

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, February 4, 2009

<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=395>

Almost 150 years after Charles Darwin published his groundbreaking work *On the Origin of Species* by Means of Natural Selection, Americans are still fighting over evolution. If anything, the controversy has recently grown in both size and intensity. In the last five years alone, for example, debates over how evolution should be taught in public schools have been heard in school boards, town councils and legislatures in more than half the states.

RECESSION AND OLDER WORKERS

Center for Retirement Research, Boston College, January 2009

http://crr.bc.edu/images/stories/Briefs/ib_9-2.pdf

With the economy in recession, questions arise about how older workers are faring and how their fate relative to younger workers compares to the past. On the one hand, labor force participation among older workers has been rising since the early 1990s, a reversal of the long-standing trend toward ever-earlier retirement. On the other hand, the edge that older workers used to have relative to younger workers when it comes to layoffs seems to have disappeared, so the rise in the unemployment rate for older workers in recessions now looks similar to that for younger workers.

RECESSION, POVERTY AND THE RECOVERY ACT

Center for American Progress, February 11, 2009

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/02/pdf/recession_poverty.pdf

The economic downturn means hard times for millions of Americans. If unemployment rates reach double-digits, as some economists fear, nearly 7 million people will lose their jobs, more than 7 million will lose their health coverage, and more than 12 million will fall into poverty.

A RELIGIOUS PORTRAIT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, January 30, 2009

<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=389>

Compared with other racial and ethnic groups, African-Americans are among the most likely to report a formal religious affiliation, with fully 87% of African-Americans describing themselves as belonging to one religious group or another, according to the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, conducted in 2007 by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life. Latinos also report affiliating with a religion at a similarly high rate of 85%; among the public overall, 83% are affiliated with a religion.

THE STATE OF MINORITIES: THE RECESSION ISSUE

Center for American Progress, January 16, 2009

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/01/state_of_minorities.html

The United States entered its most severe recession in decades in 2008. Even before the recession hit, minorities were in a more precarious economic situation than whites, largely because of fewer good employment opportunities. As the economy and the labor market declined, so did the fortunes of American families, hitting minorities especially hard.

TRENDS IN COLLEGE SPENDING: WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM? WHERE DOES IT GO?

Delta Cost Project, January 16, 2009

http://www.deltacostproject.org/resources/pdf/trends_in_spending-report.pdf

The report examines revenue and expenditure data for nearly 2,000 public and private non-profit colleges and universities, representing more than 75 percent of higher education enrollment, and analyzes recent trends, focusing on the period from 2002 to 2006. It is the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of higher education finance in the nation.

UNEMPLOYED AND UNINSURED IN AMERICA

Families USA, February 2009

<http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/unemployed-and-uninsured.pdf>

Across the United States, record numbers of families are facing the devastation of unemployment. In December 2008, 11.1 million Americans were unemployed and actively seeking work and experts predict that even more will lose their jobs in the coming months. For the families of those who become unemployed, the loss of income is often compounded by the loss of health insurance.

UNIONIZATION CLIMBS FOR TWO STRAIGHT YEARS, BUT REMAINS A FRACTION OF 1980S RATES

Center for American Progress, January 28, 2009

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/01/unions.html>

The number of American workers belonging to a labor union increased for the second year in row—and is now up to 12.4 percent. Prior to 2007, union membership rates had not increased in the last quarter century and the current union membership rates are still a fraction of what they were in the early 1980s. This second year of growth demonstrates an intense desire among Americans to become unionized, but significant legislative changes must occur in order for a substantial portion of the American workforce to get back onto union rolls.

UNIONS AND UPWARD MOBILITY FOR WOMEN WORKERS

Center for Economic and Policy Research, December 2008

http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/unions_and_upward_mobility_for_women_workers_2008_12.pdf

This paper uses the most recent data available to examine the impact of unionization on the pay and benefits of women in the paid workforce. The data suggest that even after controlling for systematic differences between union and non-union workers, union representation substantially improves the pay and benefits that women receive.

YES WE CAN...COVER MORE THAN 4 MILLION UNINSURED CHILDREN

Families USA, January 2009

<http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/yes-we-can-chip-2009.pdf>

The study shows how many children would gain coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia under the Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP) reauthorization bill passed by the House (H.R. 2).

All previous web alerts can be found at:
<http://france.usembassy.gov/politics-alert.html>